Environmental clearance to agro project for Jojoba

2827. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal from an NRI for setting up an integrated agro project for Jojoba plantation under the Wasteland Development Scheme, sponsored through the Rajasthan Government and recommended by a multi-disciplinary high powered Committee of the Central Government, has been pending final approval in the Ministry for a quite a long time; and

(b) if so, the details of the project received and the present status of its consideration / approval?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) A proposal for setting up of an integrated agro project for Jojoba plantation in favour of M'S Shekhawati Plantation (Pvt.) Ltd., Jaipur over 330.54 ha. forest land in Jaisalmer District of Rajasthan seeking approval under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 was submitted by the State Government of Rajasthan. The proposal after careful examination was rejected in view of the fragile ecology of the area. Even otherwise, diversion of forest land for commercial plantation of non forest species is not permitted according to the guidelines under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

Environmental concerns and priorities

2828. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have identified air pollution as the top priority area of concern in a National State of Environment Report, prepared for the United Nations Environment Programme, to be considered at the second Earth Summit, 2002;

(b) if so, the details of practical strategics outlined to check the rising air pollution level, especially in the metropolitan cities; and

(c) the details of other specific areas of environmental concern